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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography includes citations of journal articles and book chapters that focus on current theories related to teaching grammar in English-as-a-Second-Language and English-as-a-Foreign-Language classrooms. Citations include: (1) "Field Independence-Dependence and the Teaching of Grammar" (R. G. Abraham); (2) "Making Informed Decisions About the Role of Grammar in Language Teaching" (M. Celce-Murcia); (3) "Basic Issues Background" (M. Celce-Murcia); (4) "Interactive Oral Grammar Exercises" (Raymond F. Comeau); (5) "The Role of Grammar in Second Language Learning" (R. DeKeyser); (6) "Grammatical Explanations in ESL: Teach the Student, Not the Method" (M. R. Eisenstein); (7) "Grammar in Writing" (J. Frodesen); (8) "The Problem with Grammar: What Kind Can the Language Learner Use? (N. Garrett); (9) "Textbook Grammar: Does It Reflect Native Speaker Speech?" (E. W. Glisan and V. Drescher); (10) "Linguistic Accuracy of Textbook Grammar" (J. Herschensohn); (11) "Teaching Grammar for Proficiency" (T. V. Higgs); (12) "Teaching Grammar" (D. Larsen-Freeman); (13) "From Grammatical to Communicative Approaches" (P. A. Richard-Amato); (14) "The Status of Grammar in the Language Curriculum" (J. C. Richards); (15) "Interaction as the Key to Teaching Language for Communication" (W. Rivers); (16) "Coupling as a Text-Building, Myth-Evoking Strategy in Vietnamese: Implications for Learning To Read in Different Languages" (John Schafer); (17) "The Role of Grammar Instruction in a Communicative Approach" (T. D. Terrell); (18) "Grammar, Nonsense, and Learning" (H. G. Widdowson); and (19) "Methodology for the Teaching of Meaning" (H. G. Widdowson). (MDM)

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The Place of Grammar in the ESL/EFL Classroom: an Annotated Bibliography

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EN 740: ESL/EFL Methodology

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Grammar in the ESL/EFL Classroom: an Annotated Bibliography

The purpose of this bibliography is to explore what the current issues are in the debate surrounding the teaching of grammar in the ESL/EFL classroom. Focused upon are the current theories which are pertinent to this issue. Included are views which criticize these theories as well as those which attempt a reconciliation between them. Also included are opinions as to the place of the learner in this discussion.

Abraham, R. G. (1985). Field independence-dependence and the teaching of grammar. TESOL Quarterly, 20, 689-702.

Field independence, as defined by Abraham, is the ability to differentiate objects from their surroundings and is on a continuum which ranges from being dependent to independent. This study investigated whether less rule-oriented teaching might benefit students who are more field-dependent. Studies revealed that when a lesson is taught deductively in the traditional way, a field-independent subject will perform better. Likewise, when

a lesson is taught inductively by giving examples, a field-dependent subject will perform better. Step-by-step rule building was in evidence in subjects in both lessons. The implication from this study was that the process of learning a second language is complex and that there is a need for more research in this area.

Celce-Murcia, M. (1985). Making informed decisions about the role of grammar in language teaching. Foreign Language Annals, 18, 297-301. (Reprinted from TESOL Newsletter, Feb., 1985).

Celce-Murcia's article is very helpful for teachers who need to make an informed decision as to the place of grammar in language teaching. She states that whether to teach grammar or not should be based primarily upon the need of the learner. Learner variables such as age, proficiency level and education and instructional variables such as skill, register and need/use should be taken into consideration. Finally, she suggests effective ways to focus on form and to correct errors.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Hills, S. (1988). Basic issues background. Techniques and resources in teaching grammar. New York: Oxford University Press, 1-15.

Celce-Mercia and Hills give some background as to the problem of the teaching of grammar in the classroom for communication. The authors defend an eclectic approach since no method can solve the problems of communication. They assert that no one method has been successfully proven empirically to be the best method to use. This is due in part to learner learning style variables. And, upon that note, they discuss the need for further teacher preparedness. Since language is communication, they discuss social, semantic and discourse factors that tie in with grammar. Finally, they present techniques that can exploit the match between grammar and these other factors of language and discuss resources that are available as well.

Comeau, Raymond F. (1992). Interactive oral grammar exercises. In W. M. Rivers (Ed.), Interactive language teaching (pp. 57-69). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Comeau defines what he means by an interactive oral grammar exercise and says that it should have five qualities: be communicative, be meaningful, provide a limited choice, be expressive, and be integrated with other types of exercises. He advocates the teaching of grammar through student-to-student and teacher-to-student participation. He views the study of grammar as a social activity and puts communication on a par with correctness. For student-to-student activities, he offers dialogues, poetry and drama and information-gathering activities. For teacher-to-student activities, he suggests physical demonstration, choral responses, creative completions, and contextual clues.

DeKeyser, R. (1990, June). The role of grammar in second language learning. Three Rivers TESOL Newsletter, pp. 3-5.

The author advocates a step-by-step approach in the acquisition of communication. A sequencing of activities that give a vague knowledge of rules should lead to thorough integrated knowledge culminating in spontaneous communication. He maintains that communication can be taught by using grammar if it is

taught functionally; that is, if students are made aware that the end goal of the grammar exercise focused upon is use in communication. Likewise, students should be made "aware of formal features through communication practice once they leave the classroom" (p.5).

Eisenstein, M. R. (1987). Grammatical explanations in ESL: Teach the student, not the method. In M. H. Long & J. C. Richards (Eds.), Methodology in TESOL: A book of readings (pp. 282-292). New York: Newbury House Publishers.

Eisenstein focuses on the role of the grammatical explanation in second language teaching. Although major language teaching methodologies are reviewed, no one approach is proposed since the issue of grammatical explanation is so complex. The sole criterion for the use of grammar is dependent upon the needs of the learner; therefore, variables affecting different student populations are presented. Finally, recommendations are made based on the author's experience as a teacher and researcher as to which type of grammatical presentations are suitable to varying student populations.

Frodesen, J. (1991) Grammar in writing. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a foreign language (pp 264-276). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Frodesen introduces her article with the supposition that the shift in composition theory from writing as a product to writing as a process has led to confusion as to the place of grammar in the ESL/EFL classroom. She argues that grammar still has a role in teaching since it is an essential part of communication and it is that part of language which makes our meaning clear and precise. She proposes some general guidelines for integrating grammar into writing instruction and follows these with specific activities and techniques for carrying them out.

Garrett, N. (1986). The problem with grammar: What kind can the language learner use? The Modern Language Journal, 70, 133-148.

Garrett discusses the paradoxical problem of grammatical competence being a part of communicative competence. This paradox underlies her discussion of the current issues that she presents at the beginning of her essay. She states that theoretical linguistics has paid

too much attention to competence, with the resultant neglect of performance. From a pyscholinguistic view, she postulates that if grammar is considered as processing rules and the concept is applied to teaching, then the result may be that grammar can have a part in the acquisition of communicative proficiency.

Glisan, E. W., & Drescher, V. (1993). Textbook grammar: Does it reflect native speaker speech? The Modern Language Journal, 77, 23-33.

Glisan and Drescher attempt to answer the question as to whether textbook-based written grammar equates to native speaker spoken grammar. They discuss current issues in the teaching of grammar and summarizes important findings dealing with textbook grammar. A study comparing speech samples of native speakers of Spanish is compared with specific grammatical structures. The result of the comparison is that textbook grammar does not reflect spoken grammar in many instances. The implication of this study is that there is a need for change in language textbooks if students are to be able to communicate.

Herschensohn, J. (1988). Linguistic accuracy of textbook grammar. The Modern Language Journal, 72, 409-414.

Herschensohn examined the grammar explanation about determiners in eleven French college second language textbooks according to six linguistically based criteria. His evaluation is that many texts have grammatical terminology that is confusing and lacks descriptive examples of the points in question. Through his study he concludes that pedagogical grammar can be improved through linguistic insight gained from descriptive accuracy and generalizations about the target language. The results of his study have applications not limited to French textbooks only, but to language texts in general.

Higgs, T. V. (1985). Teaching grammar for proficiency. Foreign Language Annals, 18, 289-296.

The purpose of Higgs' paper is to reconcile the presumed dichotomy between "teaching for communication" and "teaching for grammar." He argues that communication and grammar are not separable concepts. For the foreign language learner, there needs to be both communicative

success and linguistic precision and both need to be at the heart of any foreign language pedagogy.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (1991). Teaching grammar. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (pp. 279-295). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Larsen-Freeman introduces her essay with the current history of some of the problems that exist between the use and disuse of teaching grammar in the ESL/EFL classroom. As a solution to this problem, she proposes a tri-part grammatical framework in the form of a pie chart, with each wedge consisting of form/structure, meaning/semantics, and pragmatics/the social context. Each part of the wedge is accessible from the other. Activities to practice grammar structures in the framework of the pie chart are presented, with each wedge of the pie being discussed. Second language research implications in the learning process are presented as well as other related pedagogical issues.

Richard-Amato, P. A. (1988). from grammatical to communicative approaches. Making it happen. New York: Longman, pp. 9-19.

The author highlights past approaches to language teaching and contrasts them with current trends.

Richards, J. C. (1985). The status of grammar in the language curriculum. The context of language teaching New York: Cambridge University Press, 144-157.

Richards reviews the role of grammar in language teaching and how knowledge and skill in grammar add to language proficiency. He focuses on grammar in view of language proficiency, the relationship grammar has to proficiency in terms of current second language acquisition research, and the impact such a relationship has on language-curriculum development.

Rivers, W. (1992). Interaction as the key to teaching language for communication. In W. Rivers (Ed.), Interactive language teaching (pp. 3-16). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers set forth the premise that interaction is central in order for communication to take place in the classroom. Student needs, course design, and classroom

procedures are discussed, and in that order. Presented are ways to promote interaction in the classroom along with 12 characteristics of the interactive class.

Schafer, John. (1981). Coupling as a text-building, myth-evoking strategy in vietnamese: Implications for learning to read in different languages. In Sarah Hudelson (Ed.), Learning to read in different languages (pp. 115-126). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Schafer discusses couplings in Vietnamese. Couplings are the occurrence of two words which have the same syntactic form (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, etc.) and the opposite or nearly opposite meaning and are juxtaposed in the same position in the sentence. Schafer contends that a coupling is a heuristic procedure to discover things about the world. It cannot be separated from the process of acquiring conventional wisdom. It is so tied in with the writing process that it is the ABC's of a Vietnamese writer's first step. A writer would not be viewed as learned by a reader if he did not incorporate it into his writing. In addition, coupling is seen not only as a text-building strategy, but as a myth-evoking strategy as

well, the activation of a "hearer or reader's mind units of stored cultural knowledge" (p.122).

Terrell, T. D. (1991). The role of grammar instruction in a communicative approach. The Modern Language Journal, 75, 52-63.

Discussed in the article is Krashen's model of second language acquisition which proposes that the processing of input plays the key role in second language learning and not grammar instruction. However, some informal evidence exists that indicate that adults do not automatically process input in order to develop competence. This evidence again resurrects the question as to the role of grammar in second language acquisition. Three ways are put forward as to how grammar instruction might affect acquisition.

Widdowson, H. G. (1988). Grammar, nonsense, and learning. In W. Rutherford & M. Sharwood Smith (Eds.), Grammar and second language teaching: A book of readings (pp. 146-155). New York: Newbury House.

Widdowson argues that grammar is more than a collection of sentence patterns, but is the mediator between words and context for the achievement of meaning. The lexical meaning of words and the context of shared knowledge need various features of grammar to help make meaning apparent. For the language learner, it is essential for him to know how grammar mediates, thereby enabling him to achieve meaning. Grammar, therefore, has a central role in language learning for "language learning is essentially grammar learning" (p.154).

Widdowson, H. G. (1990). Methodology for the teaching of meaning. Aspects of language teaching. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.157-180.

The underlying tenets of the structuralist and communicative approaches are contrasted . shortcomings of the structuralist approach are highlighted, with the communicative approach proposed as the adequate theory to replace it. Shortcomings of the communicative approach are also discussed.